

## Business Profile

## GSociety Media Venture Unifies and Markets Gay Life

(Feature starts on the Backpage)

A short time into the new venture, Martin decided he needed someone to lead the company in a new direction, to be more cutting edge and take more chances, he says. That resulted in the hiring of Yates, who has 30 years of experience in television, radio and marketing.

"I needed a visionary, someone who had done this before," Martin said. "He told me that we needed to go in a different direction and be a media company."

GSociety scored a major coup with Viacom, the parent company of Showtime, which produces the hit show "Queer as Folk". Viacom, which calls the show its most successful series ever, has ordered 18 new episodes of the American version of the British creation.

To publicize the partnership, GSociety is hitting the road with the cast of "Queer as Folk" for its "Beyond Babylon Tour" — after the bar in which much of the action is set — with scheduled Florida stops in Pensacola May 25-29 and in Orlando for Gay Days Disney May 29-June 4. The tour will also visit Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Cleveland, San Jose, San Diego and Long Beach, Cal., according to GSociety Marketing Director



Dan Dawson.

"I have done a lot of promos in the past year, and none have gotten people as interested as this tour has, and we haven't really even advertised this," Dawson says.

A lot of that success can be traced to marketing and understanding the growing diversity of the gay and lesbian consumer, Dawson says.

"Gay people are so diverse," he says. "You have those who are into sports, those who are into dance, those who are into all kinds of different things. We're not going to

try to be all things to all people."

Hence the different channels: GayWired.com for news and entertainment; LesbianNation.com specifically for gay women; Dance1.net for the young, urban, gay market interested in the latest dance music; and GHighway.com and QTMagazine.com for travel guides and information.

"With these different sites, we're able to define brands that appeal to the specific type of people that are at that website," Dawson says. "We're able to fill niches within this huge niche."

And things have taken off. In the past year, GayWired.com's page views have risen 300 percent and its membership 160 percent. LesbianNation's page views have increased by 1,400 percent and its membership has grown by 211 percent. What started as a small operation in one office in Miami today has matured into a company of about 70 people with 3,000-square-foot of office space in Miami and 11,000-square-foot of office and production space in Hollywood.

Not bad for a three-year-old company in the age of piles of ruined dot-com companies.

Martin previously was in the financial field before starting GSociety. Though he has been out to his parents and close friends for 12 years, the Arkansas native made a splash three years ago when he came out to the world on national television while a guest on the Cable News Network's financial show "Squawk Box". His continued involvement in gay issues culminated with the idea for the new company.

"I just felt that this would be a great project for me to be involved with," Martin says. "I wanted a job that was more entrenched in the gay community and to be involved with a new area of the business world."

## Personality Profile

## Express In-Depth: Profiling GSociety's CEO, Paul Yates

By Gregg Lasky

Paul Yates has leapt over at least a few major hurdles on his way to being a success, but don't tell him that.

"I never felt there were any strikes against me," Yates says.

But Yates, who is black and gay, has succeeded in all aspects of the business world, which so often is white and straight.

"I have a brother and two sisters and come from a great family," the 54-year-old GSociety president says. "We were raised in such a way as to believe that we could accomplish anything we wanted."

Yates came to GSociety with a strong pedigree in marketing and management, having formed one such company in 1996 and having run one beginning in 1988.

"I'm a strong believer that entertainment is really very central to our community," the self-effacing Yates says. "When we're happy, we want to be entertained. When we're sad, we want to be entertained. If we have a lot of money, we



Paul Yates and cast of "Queer as Folk"

go to Paris to be entertained. Entertainment is always in vogue."

Previously, Yates had spent 15 years in the broadcasting industry, overseeing companies that provided news and

information programming to 250 stations nationally. Before that, Yates worked for eight years in the television industry, working in labor relations and human resources, to managing celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Ed Bradley and Ted Koppel.

Yates, who was born in Quebec City, and grew up in Pennsylvania and New England, credits his family for supporting him when he came out in his early twenties. That candor about his orientation also stretched to his professional life.

"I was up for a job at Westinghouse and was meeting with the chairman of the board and I told him, 'There's something I need to tell you...I am a gay man and I have a lover.'" His employer was unfazed. Yates got the job.

"I just didn't want anyone in the company thinking they could blackmail me about my personal life," Yates says. "Who I am is who I am. I'm a business man, and I'm gay,

and I'm black, but I'm still a businessman."

He has served on the Boards of Directors of The Whitman-Walker Foundation in Washington, D.C., which provides health services to the gay and lesbian community; Us Helping Us, also in Washington, D.C., which serves gay African Americans; and the National Minority AIDS Council, a nationwide healthcare provider.

He has been a fundraiser for and contributor to the Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal Defense Fund and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, among others. In addition, he has participated in gay pride events in Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, New York City, Miami and Atlanta as well as the March on Washington and Stonewall 25.

Yates has a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master's in Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh, and a PhD. in psychology from Harvard University. Earlier in his career, Yates worked as an industrial psychologist and a schoolteacher. He is a busy man, with a mission....

## Conch Republic Travel

## Pearl's Rainbow, 'Key West's Distinctive Resort For Women'



Pearl's Rainbow is billed as "Key West's Distinctive Resort for Women." They offer rooms for every budget. All rooms have private baths, queen beds, color cable TV, telephone, and air conditioning. Tropical decor and Bahamas fans enhance the island atmosphere.

Each morning visitors can enjoy an expanded continental breakfast in their air-conditioned pavilion or poolside.

Their swimming pools are clothing optional, they have several sunbathing decks, and the ocean is just two blocks away.

As relaxing and comfortable as the guesthouse is, you'll want to experience the rest of the island. Their full-time Concierge can assist you plan snorkeling, scuba, kayaking, dolphin watches, parasailing, jet skiing, bike trails, mopeds, beaches and women-only cruises.

The guesthouse is just around the corner

from a major shopping area. Duval Street has quite a selection, from art galleries to t-shirts, jewelers to sushi bars, Jimmy Buffett to Ernest Hemingway.

Seafood is abundant and fresh, and Key West's renowned restaurants prepare an array of traditional and exotic international dishes.

There's plenty of nightlife, from rock 'n roll to disco, from piano bars to jazz, all within walking distance. Most guests park their car when they arrive and don't use it again until they leave.

Whatever your vacation needs are, the laid back island life, sun and fun, romantic or rejuvenation, pamper yourself with the special atmosphere they've created for you at Rainbow House.

Pearl's Rainbow is located at 525 United Street in Key West and can be reached online at [www.pearlsrainbow.com](http://www.pearlsrainbow.com) or by calling 1-800-749-6696 or 1-305-292-1450.

